THE ELEVENTH HOUR IN THE LIFE OF JULIA WARD HOWE

BY MAUD HOWE

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The eleventh hour in the life of Julia Ward Howe

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THE ELEVENTH HOUR

The Eleventh Hour in the Life of Julia Ward Howe

BY
MAUD HOWE

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AD MATREM

The acorns are again ripe on your oaks, the leaves of your nut tree begin to turn gold, the fruit trees you planted a lustre since, droop with their weight of crimson fruit, the little grey squirrels leap nimbly from bough to bough busily preparing for winter's siege. The air is fragrant with the perfume of wild grape, joyous with the voices of children passing to the white school house on the hill. The earth laughs with the joy of the harvest. What thank offering can I bring for this year that has not yet taught me how to live without you? Only this sheaf of gleanings from your fields!

Oak Glen, September, 1911.

FOREWORD

This slight and hasty account of some of my mother's later activities was written to read to a small group of friends with whom I wished to share the lesson of the Eleventh Hour of a life filled to the end with the joy of toil. More than one of my hearers asked me to print what I had read them, in the belief that it would be of value to that larger circle of her friends, the public. Such a request could not be refused.

THE ELEVENTH HOUR

IN THE LIFE OF

JULIA WARD HOWE

My mother's diary for 1906, her eighty-seventh year, opens with this entry:

"I pray for many things this year. For myself, I ask continued health of mind and body, work, useful, honorable and as remunerative as it shall please God to send. For my dear family, work of the same description with comfortable wages, faith in God, and love to each other. For my country, that she may keep her high promise to mankind, for Christendom, that it may become more Christlike, for

the struggling nationalities, that they may attain to justice and peace."

Not vain the prayer! Health of mind and body was granted, work, useful, honorable, if not very remunerative, was hers that year and nearly five years more, for she lived to be ninety-one and a half years old. When Death came and took her, he found her still at work. Hers the fate of the happy warrior who falls in thick of battle, his harness on his back.

How did she do it?

Hardly a day passes that I am not asked the question!

Shortly before her death, she spoke of the time when she would no longer be with us — an almost unheard-of thing for her to do. We turned the subject, begged her not to dwell on it.

"Yes!" she laughed with the old flash that has kindled a thousand audiences, "it's not my business to think about dying, it's my business to think about living!"

This thinking about living, this tremendous vitality had much to do with her long service, for the important thing of course was not that she lived ninety-one years, but that she worked for more than ninety-one years, never became a cumberer of the earth, paid her scot till the last. She never knew the pathos of doing old-age work, such as is provided in every class for those inveterate workers to whom labor is as necessary as bread or breath. The old ploughman sits by the wayside breaking stones to mend the road others shall travel

over; the old prima donna listens to her pupils' triumphs; the old statesman gives after-dinner speeches, or makes himself a nuisance by speaking or writing, *ex cathedra*, on any question that needs airing, whether it is his subject or not; she did good, vigorous work till the end, in her own chosen callings of poet and orator. What she produced in her last year was as good in quality as any other year's output. The artist in her never stopped growing; indeed, her latest work has a lucidity, a robust simplicity, that some of the earlier writings lack.

In the summer of 1909 she was asked to write a poem on Fulton for the Fulton-Hudson celebration. Ever better than her word, she not only

wrote the poem, but recited it in the New York Metropolitan Opera House on the evening of September 9th. Those who saw her, the only woman amid that great gathering of representative men from all over the world, will not forget the breathless silence of that vast audience as she came forward, leaning on her son's arm, and read the opening lines:

> A river flashing like a gem,
> Crowned with a mountain diadem, —

or the thunders of applause that followed the last lines:

> While pledge of Love's assured control,
> The Flag of Freedom crowns the pole.

The poem had given her a good deal of trouble, the last couplet in especial. The morning of the celebration,

when I went into Mrs. Seth Low's spare bedroom to wake her, she cried out:

"I have got my last verse!"

She was much distressed that the poem appeared in Collier's without the amended closing lines. The fault was mine; I had arranged with the editor Mr. Hapgood for its publication. She had done so much "free gratis" work all her life that it seemed fitting this poem should at least earn her, her travelling expenses.

"Let this be a lesson," she said, "never print a poem or a speech till it has been delivered; always give the eleventh hour its chance!"

It may be interesting here to recall that the Atlantic Monthly paid her five dollars for the Battle Hymn of

the Republic, the only money she ever received for it.

Her power of keeping abreast of the times is felt in the Fulton poem, where she rounds out her eulogy of Fulton's invention of the steamboat with a tribute to Peary. Only a few days before the news of our latest arctic triumph had flashed round the world, her world, whose business was her business as long as she lived in it; so into the fabric of the poem in honor of Fulton, she weaves an allusion to this new victory.

On her ninety-first birthday a reporter from a Boston paper asked her for a motto for the women of America. She was sitting on the little balcony outside her town house, reading her Greek Testament, when the young man

was announced. She closed her book, thought for a moment, then gave the motto that so well expressed herself:

"Up to date!"

Was there ever anything more characteristic?

In December, 1909, the last December she was to see, she wrote a poem called "The Capitol," for the first meeting of the American Academy of Arts and Letters at Washington. The poem, published in the Century Magazine for March, 1910, is as good as any she ever wrote, with one exception — the Battle Hymn; and that, as she has told us, "wrote itself." She had arranged to go to Washington to read her poem before the Association. Though we feared the winter journey for her, she was so bent

on going that I very reluctantly agreed to accompany her. A telegram, signed by William Dean Howells, Robert Underwood Johnson, and Thomas Nelson Page, all officers of the Association, urging her not to take the risk of so long a journey in winter, induced her to give up the trip. She was rather nettled by the kindly hint and flashed out:

"Hah! they think that I am too old, but there's a little ginger left in the old blue jar!"

She never thought of herself as old, therefore she never was really old in the essentials. Her iron will, her indomitable spirit, held her frail body to its duty till the very end.

"Life is like a cup of tea, the sugar is all at the bottom!" she cried one day. This was the very truth; she

knew no "winter of discontent." Her autumn was all Indian summer, glorious with crimson leaves, purple and gold sunsets.

In April, 1910, she wrote the third and last of her poems to her beloved friend and "Minister" James Freeman Clarke. She read this poem twice, at the centenary celebration of Mr. Clarke's birth held at the Church of the Disciples, April 3rd, and the day after at the Arlington St. Church. Compared with the verses written for Mr. Clarke's fiftieth birthday and with those celebrating his seventieth birthday, this latest poem is to me the best. The opening lines bite right into the heart of the matter; as she read them standing in the pulpit a thrill passed through the congre-

gation of her fellow disciples gathered together in memory of their founder.

Richer gift can no man give
Than he doth from God receive.
We in greatness would have pleasure,
But we must accept our measure.
Let us question, then, the grave,
Querying what the Master gave,
Whom, in his immortal state,
Grateful love would celebrate.

Only human life was his,
With its thin-worn mysteries.

. . . . .

Lifting from the Past its veil,
What of his does now avail?
Just a mirror in his breast
That revealed a heavenly guest,
And the love that made us free
Of the same high company.

The poem on Abraham Lincoln written for the Lincoln Centenary and read by her at the meeting in Symphony Hall, Boston, February

12th, 1909, is perhaps the best of the innumerable memorial poems she composed. As one by one the centenaries of this and that member of the band of great men and women who made our country illustrious in the 19th Century were celebrated, it came to be considered as a matter of course that she, almost the last survivor of that noble company, should write a poem for the occasion. So difficult a critic as Professor Barrett Wendell said to me that he considered some of the stanzas of the Lincoln poem as good as the Battle Hymn. I remember he particularly liked the last two verses,

A treacherous shot, a sob of rest,
A martyr's palm upon his breast,
A welcome from the glorious seat
Where blameless souls of heroes meet;

And, thrilling through unmeasured days,
A song of gratitude and praise;
A cry that all the earth shall heed,
To God, who gave him for our need.

During her last summer she was in correspondence with her friend Mr. Garrison about the publication of a volume that should gather up into one sheaf these scattered occasional poems. She had this much on her mind and made every endeavor to collect the poems together: some of them had never been printed, and of others she possessed no copy. She stopped in Boston on her way to Smith College in the last days of last September, and spent an afternoon in her Beacon St. house looking for some of those lost poems. Her wish was fulfilled, and the posthumous volume, to which we

gave the title "At Sunset," lies beside me. Look down the page of contents and note how various are the names that figure in the list of personal poems, and what a wide range of character they show; beginning with Lincoln, Doctor Holmes, Washington Allston, Robert E. Lee, Whittier, Lucy Stone, Phillips Brooks, Robert Browning, Archbishop Williams, and ending with Michael Anagnos — this is a wide swath to cut, wide as her own sympathy.

One poem of hers that has soothed many a wounded heart should be better known than I believe it to be. Though it has no dedication, it might well be dedicated to the men and women who have tried, and who to the world seem to have tried in vain.

ENDEAVOR

" What hast thou for thy scattered seed,
O Sower of the plain?
Where are the many gathered sheaves
Thy hope should bring again? "
" The only record of my work
Lies in the buried grain."

" O Conqueror of a thousand fields!
In dinted armor dight,
What growths of purple amaranth
Shall crown thy brow of might? "
" Only the blossom of my life
Flung widely in the fight."

" What is the harvest of thy saints,
O God! who dost abide?
Where grow the garlands of thy chiefs
In blood and sorrow dyed?
What have thy servants for their pains? "
" This only, — to have tried."

On the 26th of July, 1908, she wrote: " The thought came to me that if God only looked upon me, I should become radiant like a star." This

thought is embodied in the following quatrain.

Wouldst thou on me but turn thy wondrous
sight,
My breast would be so flooded by thy light,
The light whose language is immortal song,
That I to all the ages should belong.

Two lines of hers have always seemed to me to express above all others her life's philosophy:

In the house of labor best
Can I build the house of rest!

Of all her labors, heavy and varied as those of Hercules, her poetry was what she loved best. But she lived in an age when there are few who can take their spiritual meat in verse. The age of steel is an age of prose, and so she labored in season and out to give her message in prose as well as in poetry, with the spoken word as

well as the written. She was the most willing of troubadours; she hastened gladly wherever she was called, whether it was to some stately banquet of the muses like the Bryant Centenary, or to a humble company of illiterate negroes, in the poor little chapel at Santo Domingo, where she preached all one season. Whether some rich and powerful association like the Woman's Club at Chicago summoned her or some modest group of working women on Cape Cod, she was always ready. She asked no fee, but accepted what was given her. She spoke and wrote oftenest for love, and next often for an honorarium of five dollars. The first need of her being was to give. So much had been given to her that she was forever trying to pay the debt by

giving of her store to others. I find in her own handwriting the best expression of this need of giving, that was perhaps the prime necessity of her life.

"I, for one, feel that my indebtedness grows with my years. And it occurred to me the other day that when I should depart from this earthly scene, "God's poor Debtor" might be the fittest inscription for my gravestone, if I should have one. So much have I received from the great Giver, so little have I been able to return."

One day a rash scatter-brained fellow who was always getting himself and others into hot water asked her this question:

"Is it not always our duty to sacrifice ourselves for others?"

She knew very well that he was con-

templating a perfectly reckless step and was trying to hoodwink her — and himself — into thinking the action noble, because it would be so disadvantageous to himself. The boy I fear forgot her answer; here it is for you to remember and lay to heart.

"We must always remember that we come into the world alone, that we go out of the world alone, that there is nothing to us but ourselves."

Certain things, she held, we must sacrifice, selfish personal ends, comfort, pleasure, ease, but if we are to fight the good fight we must not make the fancied sacrifice of letting our arms rust while we lay them down to fight another's battle — nine times out of ten an easier thing to do than to fight our own. She had met with so

much opposition all her life through serving the unpopular causes of Abolition, Woman's Suffrage, Religious Freedom, she had fought so grimly for what, when she entered the ranks, always seemed a Forlorn Hope, that she knew the real joy lies in the battle, not in the victory.

Her last public appearance in Boston was at a hearing in the State House, where she came to plead for the cause of pure milk. This was on the 23rd of May, 1910, four days before her ninety-first birthday. There had been a great deal about the Pure Milk Crusade in the newspapers, the Boston Journal had made a special question of it and one of the reporters had already interviewed her on the subject. The Chairman of the Massachusetts

Milk Consumer's Association had asked her to give her name as honorary president of the league. This she was glad to do, but this was not enough, she wanted to do more. I was called up once or twice on the 'phone and asked if I thought Mrs. Howe was able to speak before the legislative committee at one of the hearings. I thought that with the birthday festivities so near and the fatigue of moving down to Newport before her, this would be a little too much, and consequently "begged off." In these days there was a meeting in Cambridge in memory of Margaret Fuller. She was invited to be present, and was determined to go.

"They have not asked me to speak," she said more than once.

"Of course they will ask you when they see you," I assured her.

"I have my poem on Margaret written for her Centenary," she said.

"Take it with you," I advised. "Of course you will be asked to say something, and then you will have your poem in your pocket and be all prepared."

I was unable to go with her to the meeting, a young lady who came to read aloud to her going in my place. They came back late in the afternoon; the meeting had been long and I saw immediately that she was very tired. The cause of this soon appeared.

"They did not ask me to speak," she said, "and I was the only person present who had known Margaret and remembered her."

I was deeply troubled about this. I saw that she had been hurt, and I knew that if I had gone to the meeting I could have managed to let it be known that she had brought her poem to read. For a very little time she was a good deal depressed by the incident — felt she was out of the race, no longer entered on the card for the running.

Very soon after this they telephoned me that there would be another hearing on the milk question at half past ten, and that it would probably go on all the morning. She had been very bright when she came down to breakfast and made a capital meal. When I went into her room, I found her at her desk all ready for the day's campaign, though I knew that the Margaret Fuller incident still rankled.

"There's to be a hearing at the State House on the milk question; they want you dreadfully to speak."

She was all alert and full of interest in a moment.

"What do you say, shall we go?"

"Give me half an hour!"

I left her for that half hour. When I returned she had sketched out her speech and dressed herself in her best flowered silk cloak and her new lilac satin and lace hood — a birthday gift from a poor seamstress. We drove to the State House together, and after some difficulty in finding the right lift finally reached the room where the hearing was going on. She had made these notes for her speech, but had not brought them with her; we found them afterward in her desk.

"It seems to me that the theme of this hearing is one which should commend itself to all good citizens. I think that even our patient American public is tired of the delay, for although we are in many ways a happy people, I do think that our public is a long suffering one. I should think that we might hope for a speedy settlement. For we are not discussing points of taste and pleasure, but matters of life and death. There are various parties concerned in the desired settlement, but to my mind the party most nearly concerned is the infant who comes into this world relying upon a promise which we are bound to fulfil, the promise that he shall at least enjoy the conditions of life. I learn from men of science that no possible sub-

stitute exists for good milk in the rearing of infants. How can we then delay the action which shall secure it?"

She listened to the long speeches with interest, little realizing that this was to be her last public appearance in Boston. When the time came for her to speak, it was noticed that while all the others took the oath upon the Bible to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, the ceremony was omitted with her. As her name was called she rose and stepped forward leaning on my arm.

"You may remain seated, Mrs. Howe," said the Chairman.

"I prefer to stand," was the answer. So, standing in the place where, year after year, she had stood to ask

for the full rights of citizenship, for the right to vote, she made her last thrilling appeal for justice. Her keen wit, her power of hitting the nail on the head, were never used to better purpose. The hearing had been long and tedious. There had been many speeches, the farmers who produce the milk, the dealers who sell it, worthy citizens who were trying to improve the quality of the milk supply, experts whose testimony showed the far from ideal conditions under which the milk of the great city is brought to its consumers. Everything had been proper, commonplace, prosaic, deadly dull. Her speech was short and to the point, giving in a few words the whole crux of the matter. Her presence, the presence of the old Sybil,

mother, grandmother, great-grandmother was extraordinarily romantic, it lifted the whole occasion out of the realm of the commonplace into that of the poetic. Her speech followed in substance the notes she had prepared, but it was enhanced with touches of eloquence such as this:

"We have heard a great deal about the farmers' and the dealers' side of this case. We want the matter settled on the ground of justice and mercy; it ought not to take long to settle what is just to all parties: justice to all! Let us stand on that. There is one deeply interested party however, of whom we have heard nothing. He cannot speak for himself, I am here to speak for him, the infant!"

The impression made was over-

whelming. This ancient Norn, grave and beautiful as the elder Fate, claiming Justice for the infant in the cradle! The effect upon the audience was electrical. The roughest "hayseed" in the chamber "sat up;" the meanest dealer was moved, the sleepiest legislator awoke. The silence in that place of creaking chairs, and coughing citizens, was amazing. All listened as to a prophetess as, step by step, she unfolded the case of the infant as against farmer and dealer. When Mr. Arthur Dehon Hill, the Counsel for the Association, led her from the room he said:

"Mrs. Howe, you have scored our first point."

The friend, who had called in her help, was one of the strongest "Anti-

Suffragists." This was a very characteristic happening. Whenever any great question of public interest, not connected with Woman Suffrage, came up, the " antis " were continually coming to ask her help. If the cause was a good one she always gave it. She was no respecter of persons; the cause was the thing. Over and over again she was appealed to by those who were moving heaven and earth to oppose her in Suffrage, to help some of their lesser ends. She was always ready; always hitched her rope to their mired wagon and helped pull with a will. Her wagon was hitched to a star, the force celestial in her tow rope was at the service of all who asked for it in a good cause.

A few days after the State-house

hearing, she fell in her own room and broke a rib. She recovered from the effects of this and in the last days of June moved down to her place at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, where she passed nearly four happy months with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren about her. Three weeks before her death she wrote to the Reverend Ada Bowles:

"I have it in mind to write some open letters about Religion and to publish them in the Woman's Journal."

She was at work upon the first of these, a definition of true Religion, when the end came. Her last Tuesday on earth, she presided at the Papeterie, a social club of Newport ladies, in whose meetings she delighted. She

was in splendid vein; that gay company of clever women gathered around her as pretty butterflies hover about a queen rose, still fascinated, still entranced by this belle of ninety years. She wore over her pretty white dress the hood she had received from Brown University, the year before, when she was given the degree of Doctor of Literature. She was as usual the central figure at the meeting, and gave the Club a vivid account of her visit to Smith College, whither she had gone the week before to receive another degree. The next morning she worked at her "Definition of True Religion;" five days later, the summons came. Leaving the task unfinished, as she would have said, "the iron to cool upon the anvil," she passed on to the

larger task that now absorbs her ardent spirit.

During her last years she received many letters, even printed documents, with minute inquiries touching her method of life. A society of Nonogenarians sent a set of questions about her habits of body, and mind, with a postscript asking especially to what she attributed her unusually prolonged activity. Though I am sure she must have answered, for she was faithful beyond belief in such matters, we have found no record of her answer. Now she has left us, her children are often asked the same sort of question about her:

"How did she do it?"

"What was her secret?"

"Why did she die ninety-one years

young, instead of ninety-one years old?"

If she herself had tried to tell you her secret, to account for her rare powers preserved so late in life, spent so prodigally at an age when the lean and slippered pantaloon hoards his scant store of strength as a miser hoards his gold, she would have said something like this:

"You must remember I had a splendid Irish wet-nurse!"

Perhaps she laid too much stress on that excellent woman's share in making her all she was (no foster-mother was ever more faithfully remembered by nursling); she owed something, surely, to her forebears. She came of good old fighting stock; in her veins thrilled the blood of Francis Marion, the Swamp

Fox of Virginia, of General Greene, both heroes of the Revolution, of that staunch old rebel, Roger Williams, of the Wards, for two generations colonial Governors of Rhode Island. All this fighting blood, together with her red hair, gave a certain militant touch to her character; she was a good fighter for every just cause, especially the cause of Peace. Though she spoke oftener of the Irish wet-nurse than of her ancestors, she did not altogether forget them as an anecdote told by my sister, Mrs. Richards, proves. They were at some meeting, a religious gathering I think, where one speaker — rather an effete pessimist — closed a speech in the key of the "Everlasting No," with the doleful words:

"I feel myself weighed down by

a sense of the sins of my ancestors."

My mother, who was the next speaker, sprang to her feet with the retort:

"And I feel myself lifted up on the virtues of mine!"

There rang out the key-note of her life, the "Everlasting Yea," the trumpet-tone to which all high souls rally.

Many people have had fine wet-nurses; a legion have the same legacy of power in their blood, who do not accomplish much with it.

Poeta nascitur, non fit! She was of course born an uncommon person, but I believe the manner and habits of her life, quite as much as her native power, made for her vigorous old age. As I look back on the intimate compan-

ionship of a lifetime, I realize that these excellent life habits, habits that any one of us can cultivate, had even more to do with her long continued usefulness than the great Irish wet-nurse herself.

First, and last, and all the time, she worked, and worked, and worked, steadily as nature works, without rest, without haste. She was never idle, she was never in a hurry. Though she played too, earnestly, enthusiastically, it was never idle play; there was always a dash of poetry in her pastime, whether it was making a charade for the Brain Club, or composing a nursery rhyme for her grandchildren. The capacity for work like everything else grows by cultivation. She started life with a rarely active mind and tem-

perament. So do many people. It was the habit of study, of concentration, of work, carefully cultivated from the first, held on to in spite of difficulties — she had plenty of them — that wrought what seemed to some of her contemporaries a miracle. She could say like Adam in Shakespeare's play "As You Like It:"

"My age is as a lusty winter;
Frosty, but kindly: let me go with you;
I'll do the service of a younger man
In all your business and necessities."

"Let me go with you!" This is what Age is forever saying to Youth. "Do not leave me behind — I can still serve!" So long as Age makes good the claim, heydey, headlong, good-natured Youth lets the veteran march in its glorious ranks. Youth

does not crowd him out, as the veteran too often thinks, he drops out because he "cannot keep the pace!" The reason she did not drop out was because she made good her claim. The children and grandchildren of those with whom she first enlisted, were content to have her march with them, still in the van.

Her training, from her very start in life, made her a cosmopolitan; one of the factors of this world citizenship was her very early study of foreign languages. French, Italian and Latin she knew almost from the time she could speak, so that she gathered into her spirit the essence of the race genius of the Latins. Later came the Teutonic baptism, for she only learned German at fourteen, when her adored

brother, Sam Ward, came home from Heidelberg, brimming over with the songs, the poetry, the philosophy of Germany. She studied Schiller and Goethe with ardor — among her treasures, we have found a long autograph letter from Goethe to her tutor, Dr. Cogswell. In her youth there were still cultivated French people living in New York, who had taken refuge there during the reign of terror. She remembered one of these gentlemen in exile who gave her French lessons, another who came to the house when there was a dinner party to mix the salad, a third who came to dress her hair for a ball. Then there were a group of Italian political exiles who were made welcome at her father's house, and the Greek boy (a fugitive

from the unspeakable Turk), Christy Evangelides, adopted by him, who till the day of his death spoke of her as his sister Julia. All these early influences tended to make a cosmopolitan of the little lady while she was still in the nursery. The general culture of the "little old New York" of that time was far broader than that of Boston; the narrow swaddling bands of Puritan provincialism never bound her free and vaulting spirit. From world citizenship to universal citizenship, to other world citizenship is a far cry. There are men and women with a truly cosmopolitan spirit who never attain that wider universal citizenship. She often quoted Margaret Fuller's "I accept the universe." Though keenly aware of the manner in which Margaret had

laid herself open to ridicule by this high-sounding phrase, without herself formulating it (her sense of humor could never have allowed that), she practically did "accept the universe," was always conscious of a sort of universal citizenship that made the affairs of every oppressed people her affairs. No hand, however dirty, was ever stretched out to her that she did not take it in her own and in taking it recognize the God in the man. She carried a touchstone in her bosom by which she found gold in natures that to others seemed trivial and base. She had few intimate friends, none in the usual sense of the term, for with all her bonhommie that made her the "friend of all the world," the Universal Friend was her only real intimate. Her re-

serve of soul was impenetrable; only her poems, and occasionally a page in her diary, give us any insight into her spiritual nature — glimpses of a certain high companionship with the stars and the planets.

We hear much of the dual nature of man. The term misleads. Man, or at least woman has a triple nature, is made up of flesh, mind and spirit. How did she use these three different natures — the physical, the intellectual, the spiritual?

In her youth the views of health were very different from what they are now. As a child, she lived the greater part of the year in New York, where she was never encouraged to take much outdoor air or exercise. Every afternoon at three o'clock the big yellow

and blue family coach, drawn by two fat horses, came to the door to take the children out for a drive. Even when they went to the country for a change of air, the children's complexions were more considered than their health. Miss Danforth, an old friend of the family, told my mother in later years of having met the Wards at the seaside, where Julia, who had a delicate ivory complexion, wore a thick green worsted veil when she went down to the beach.

"Little Julia has another freckle today," the visitor was told. "It was not her fault, the nurse forgot her veil."

She was from the first a natural student, loving her books better than anything else; but she was a perfectly

normal child too and her good spirits and her social gifts often tempted her from her work. Her sister Louisa remembered that she used to make her maid tie her into her chair, so that she should not be able to leave her study should the temptation assail her. In spite of a too sedentary youth, she started life with an uncommonly good body. After her marriage to my father she received many new and valuable ideas on matters hygienic, and while never a great pedestrian she always walked twice a day till the very end of her life. Still it must be confessed that her muscles were the least developed part of her. For the last twenty years she was rather lame, the result of a fall, when her knee was badly injured. She was always per-

sistent in walking as much as she was able however, in spite of the effort it cost her. During the summer and autumn, she passed a large part of the day, studying and reading, on the piazza of her country house at Oak Glen in Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

Though for many years she left the housekeeping to the daughter or granddaughter who was living with her, she always kept her own bank account and never allowed any one to take charge of her finances. She often lamented that her hands were so useless for household tasks, envying her granddaughters' dexterity with scissors and needle. I must not forget to mention her practising. She had a beautiful voice which had been carefully trained in the old Italian method.

She practised her scales regularly all her life; I have often heard her say she believed the exercise of singing was very valuable in preparing her for public speaking. She was faithful too in practising on the piano, and always played her scales so that her fingers never lost their flexibility or the power to do the things she really wanted them to do — to hold the pen (she almost never dictated, but wrote everything with her own hand), to play the piano, to accompany her speaking with appropriate gestures. To the last her hands retained their exquisite shape; the cast made from them after death shows their unimpaired beauty.

My father was very strict about diet; all "fried abominations" were taboo with him, pastry, high season-

ing, ham, cocoanut cakes — all rich food — were anathema maranatha. From first to last she was frankly a rebel in this matter. It was said, in the family, that she had the digestion of an ostrich. In spite of all opposition she calmly continued to eat whatever she fancied to the end of her life. During her last summer she wrote to her physician asking permission to eat ham and pastry, dishes that to her daughters seemed a little heavy for summer weather. At her last luncheon party she was advised not to eat pâté de foies gras or to drink champagne; she put aside the advice with the familiar remark we all knew so well:

"I have taken these things all my life and they have never hurt me."

The fact of the matter was, she had a perfect digestion which she used carefully and never abused. She ate moderately and slowly, with an entire disregard to what is usually considered good for old people. She rose at seven; in her youth and middle age she took a cold bath, in later years the bath was tepid — well or ill, it was never omitted. During the last twenty years, that great fourth score so rich in happiness to herself and her family, and that greater family of hers, the Public, she took a little light wine with her dinner, "for her stomach's sake," as she would say, quoting St. Paul. This, with a cup of tea for breakfast, was the only stimulant she needed, for her spirits were so buoyant, her temperament so overflowing

with the *joie de vivre,* that we called her the "family champagne." Breakfast with us was a social meal; there was always conversation and much laughter for she came down in the morning with her spirits at their highest level. She slept about eight hours. Until her seventieth year I never knew her to lie down in the daytime, unless she was suffering with headache. The first part of that seventieth year was not a good time for her. More hearty healthy people are killed every year by the sentence: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten," than by any four diseases you like to name. Even her radiant health, her buoyant temperament felt its depressing influence; as the weeks and months went by and

she found herself quite as vigorous in her seventieth year as she had been in her sixty-ninth, she forgot all about her age and resumed her activities, retaining under protest the daily nap. She lay down with the clock on the bed beside her; twenty minutes was quite time enough to "waste in napping!" During the last five or six years, always grudgingly, she gave a little more time to resting, taking a half-hour's siesta before luncheon, another before dinner, "to rest her back." She always sat in a straight backed chair, never in her long life having learned how to "lounge" in an easy chair. She was by nature a night owl and never wanted to go to bed if there was any other night owl to keep her company. So much for her use of that

faithful servant, the body. If the development of her muscles was not quite up to the modern standard, her intellectual training far surpassed it. From first to last she kept her mind in the same state of high training that the athlete keeps his body, strove for that perfect balance of power in all the different functions of the brain that an all-round athlete aims for in his physique. I never remember a time when she relaxed the mental gymnastics that kept her mind strong, supple, active.

Once, at a crucial moment, when beset by perplexities, I asked for advice, her answer, stamped on my memory as long as it shall hold together, was given in three Latin words:

"*Posce fortem animum.*" Ask for a strong mind! The motto of her English friend, Edward Twistleton, known and loved by her generation of Bostonians.

Ask for a strong mind; ask earnestly enough and you will get it, will learn to laugh at that old-fashioned bogey, the fear of being considered "strong-minded."

Long ago, when a silly acquaintance demanded if it was true she was a strong-minded woman, she parried with the counter thrust:

"Is it not better to be strong-minded than to be weak-minded?"

If you want a strong mind or a strong body there is only one way to get it, by faithful exercise. There is no royal road, no easy short cut to either goal.

The wise friend, the good physician can point out the way, you yourself must tread it!

She always read her letters and the newspapers (history in the making) immediately after breakfast. Then came the morning walk, a bout of calisthenics, or a game of ball; after this she settled to the real serious business of the day; ten o'clock saw her at her desk. She began the morning with study, took up the hardest reading she had on hand. In her youth she read Goethe; in her middle life, when she was deep in the study of German philosophy, Kant, Fichte or Hegel. For years Kant was the most intimate companion of her thought. In the early sixties, when she was in the forties, her diary was filled with Kant's

philosophy. Sometimes she differs with his conclusions, sometimes amplifies them, oftenest endorses them.

"One chosen lover, one chosen philosopher!" was her motto. While she owed much to Spinoza and records in her journal that Kant does not do him justice, her philosopher par excellence was Immanuel Kant. On her seventieth birthday the Saturday Morning Club of Boston gave her a beautiful jewel with seven moonstones and one topaz. At a dinner soon after she wore this jewel to pin a lace scarf. The conversation at table turned on Kantian philosophy and she was asked some question concerning it.

"Do you think I wear the Categorical Imperative on my left shoulder?" she cried.

"Is this the Categorical Imperative?" asked Mrs. Whitman, pointing to the jewel that held the lace. After that the club's jewel went by the name of one of the toughest nuts in Kant's philosophy.

When she was fifty years old she learned Greek; from the time she could read it fluently, the Greek philosophers, historians, and dramatists shared with the Germans those precious hours of morning study. In the end the Hellenes routed the Teutons, and remained her most cherished intimates. At luncheon she would tell us what she had been studying, an excellent way to teach children history. I shall never forget the day when she had read in Xenophon's Anabasis the account of the retreat of the

Greeks, who formed part of the expedition of Cyrus. She came dancing into the dining room, where the children were waiting for their soup, waving her beautiful hands and crying:

"Thalatta! Thalatta!" the cry of the wearied Greeks on first catching sight of the sea, after wandering for years in the interior of the Persian empire.

No event in history is quite so real to me as Hannibal's crossing the Alps. Day by day she took us with that valiant Carthaginian general on his long journey across Hispania, over the Pyrenees, through Gaul, along the Rhone, and over the Graian Alps. The day Hannibal finally got his elephants over the Little Saint Bernard Pass, and down into Italy, was one of

positive rejoicing for us little ones. Her imagination was so keen that when she repeated to us what she had been studying, it always seemed as if she had seen these things with her own eyes, not merely read about them. The effort of studying Greek whetted her mind to its keenest edge. Aristotle and Plato, with her Greek Testament, she read to the last. She talked with us less about the philosophers than the dramatists and historians. I remember how much we heard about the Birds of Aristophanes, one of her favorite classics. Reading Greek was, I think, the greatest pleasure of her later life. One afternoon last summer, when a pretty girl of a studious turn came to see her, I chanced to hear her parting words, said with a fervor and

solemnity that impressed the young visitor:

"Study Greek, my dear, it's better than a diamond necklace!"

After the morning plunge into Greek or German philosophy "to tone up her mind," she took up whatever literary task she was at work upon, "put the iron on the anvil," as her phrase was, "and hammered" at it till luncheon. She was a most careful and conscientious writer, writing, rewriting, and "polishing" her work with inexhaustible patience. Occasionally she got a poem all whole, in one piece, like The Battle Hymn. This was rare though; as a rule she toiled and moiled over her manuscripts. In the afternoon she was at her desk again, unless there was some outside

engagement — answering letters, reading books in a lighter vein, Italian poetry, a Spanish play, a book of travels or, best of all, a good French novel.

Each day opened with the stern drill of the Greek or German philosophy, by which her mind was exercised and at the same time stored with the thoughts of the wise, the labors of the good, the prayers of the devout. That was the first process, the taking in, receiving the wisdom of the ages. Then came the second or creative process, when she gave out even as she had received. This regular mental exercise was like a series of gymnastics, by which the receptive and creative functions of the brain were kept in perfect working order. If you are to

pour out, you must first *pour in*. If your lamp is to serve as a beacon light, it must be well trimmed and filled with oil every day.

She never in my memory took up any work after dark. Unless she was called abroad by some festivity or meeting, the evening was our play time. She invariably dressed for dinner, which was followed by talk, whist, music, and reading aloud. She rarely used the precious daylight for reading English novels, so at night she was ready to listen to some "rattling good story" recommended by one of the grandchildren. She delighted in Stevenson, Crawford, Cable, Barrie, Stanley Weyman, Conan Doyle, Meredith, Tolstoi and Sienkiewicz. How she loved the friends of bookland, the

friends who never hurt or bore! The new ones were welcome, but she was faithful to the old and liked nothing better than to reread those masterpieces of her youth, the novels of Scott, Dickens and Thackeray. We read Pickwick every year or two; she never wearied of the greatest English novelist's greatest masterpiece. A good ghost story made her flesh creep; she was often kept awake by the troubles of the "people in the book," who were so real to her that, when they were having a very bad time of it, she would spread her hands before her face and cry out:

"Stop! Stop! I cannot endure it!"

Money troubles of hero or heroine especially afflicted her; this was odd, for she bore the loss of the greater part

of her own fortune with courage and equanimity. Though she knew the value of money, and practised the most touching little economies so that she might have more to give away, she cared very little about money and was always too busy with more important matters to think much of it. The stories of arctic adventure, Jack London's especially, "gave her the shivers;" she ached with the cold and hunger of his dogs and heroes. The younger people among the listeners often envied her enthusiasm. Her imagination was so keen, her power of making believe the story was real so tantalizing, infectious too, that it carried us through many a book that would have been dull without it.

One of the last books she enjoyed

was Dr. Morton Prince's Dissociation of a Personality. She was deeply interested in this last word on psychology and every day at luncheon gave us an account of Sally's last prank.

In her later years, though she wrote much poetry, she did not read as much English verse as in her youth. I do not know at what period she studied Shakespeare, but she was so familiar with the plays that at the theatre I have often heard her murmur a correction of a line falsely given by some player. Her memory was prodigious; it was like a vast collection of pigeonholes, where there was a place for everything, and everything was in its place. She seemed to have a sort of mental card-catalogue of all the knowledge that was stored away in her

capacious brain. It was as if the subjects were all classified, and when she wished to speak, write or think on any given one, she consulted the catalogue, then went straight to the alcove in that well stored library and brought forth volume after volume dealing with the subject under consideration. It will hardly be believed that she wrote her volume of Reminiscences entirely from memory, never so much as consulting her own diary. It has been said of her that she remembered all she ever knew, whereas most of us forget a large part of what we have known. She certainly had an unusual command of her own knowledge. On one of my long absences in Europe, I had taken with me by mistake her large Worcester's dictionary, thinking it was mine. On my

return after an absence of more than two years, I exclaimed:

"How dreadful it was of me to take your dictionary — what have you done — did you buy a new one?"

"I did not know you had taken it," she said.

"But — how did you get along without a dictionary?"

She was surprised at the question.

"I never use a word whose meaning I do not know."

"But the spelling?"

She gave a funny little French gesture of the shoulders, inherited with so much else from her Huguenot ancestors, of whom she knew little and thought much. It meant, I suppose:

"When you have learned Latin, Greek, French, German, Spanish and

Italian, you will have learned how to spell English — perhaps!"

At sunset, sitting upon her piazza at Oak Glen, her eyes fixed on the flaming sky beyond her pines, if she chanced to be alone, she would repeat an ode of Horace. She was learning one, line by line, when the summons came. I remember her saying that this made the thirtieth ode she had committed to memory. *Nous revenons à nos premiers amours.* Horace, the delight of her youth, consoled what might have been some lonely hours in her last days.

So much for the regular intellectual drill, by which she kept her mind delicately keen, as the soldier keeps his weapons for the fight, as the craftsman keeps the tools for his work. Admirable as this was, it was only the secondary

source of her power. What was it fed the inner flame of her life so that it shone through her face, as fire shines through an alabaster vase?

She tapped the great life current that flows round the world; to those who know the trick, 'tis the simplest, most natural thing in the world to do, as easy as for the babe to draw the milk from its mother's breast. You have merely to put yourself " on the circuit," let the force universal flow through you, and you can move mountains or bridge oceans. She knew the trick; she was forever trying to teach it to others, to women in especial, to working women above all others.

Her first waking act was prayer, aspiration; her last, thanksgiving, praise! Just as some persons' first

action is to open the window and fill the lungs with fresh air, or to drink a glass of cold water, hers was to open wide the door of her soul and let the breath of the Spirit blow through it. She was a mystic, a seer. The Battle Hymn was not the only poem " given " her in the gray dawn of day when the birds were singing their matins; many of her best poems, her best thoughts came to her during the first moments of consciousness, when the Marthas of this world are wondering what they shall get for breakfast, or what clothes they shall put on. Poor Martha, dear Martha! Try for the uplift and the grace — they will come to you, even if yours is not the art to make a poem out of them. That is a special gift! Live your poem, and its music will turn

the lives of those with whom you live from prose to poetry, change life's water into wine.

She very rarely talked with her children on religious matters. Both she and my father had a dread of giving us the very narrow religious training they themselves had received. Conscious of the mistakes of such a bringing up, she shunned them and, though we all knew how devout a person she was, it was chiefly through her writings and her poems that we received a sense of the religious side of her nature. Her faith in a divine Providence was the deep well-spring in which the roots of her being were fixed. She lived in daily communion with the divine life. Her diary is full of dreams that are like the ecstatic visions of the

old saints. In the note already referred to written on the margin of a poem in her posthumous volume, At Sunset, she says:

"The thought came to me that if God only looked upon me I should become radiant like a star."

Beatrice, her favorite of Shakespeare's heroines, says:

"There was a star danced and under that I was born!"

In October, the month she left us, a wonderful star appears in the heavens, and at this season of the year shines with an extraordinary brilliancy. She always watched for it and often pointed it out to others.

"What is the name of that star?" I have heard her ask more than one man of science. "It changes color

like a flash light in a light house, flashes from white to green and then to red." At last she asked the question of a man who could answer it and learned that her star's name was Aldebaran and that is one of the stars of the constellation of Taurus. Her horoscope was never cast, but I believe that she was born under the influence of that wonderful star that flashes first the color of the diamond, then the ruby, and last the emerald, and that when she was born, Aldebaran danced!

Though she so rarely spoke of such matters, we who lived with her were fed at second hand by that deep limpid stream, the river of immortal life, in which she grew rooted deep. One of the many manifestations of this was the joyousness with which she

took up each day and its little cares. She always came into the room in the morning like a child who has some good news to share with the family. Those wonderful spirits, that overflowed in every sort of wit, jest and antic, took the sting from the bitterest nature; in her company the satirist grew kind, the cynic humane. A deep spiritual joy seemed to enwrap her like a sort of enveloping climate. Where she was, the sun shone, the sky was blue, birds sang, brooks babbled, for so tremendous was her spiritual force that it always conquered. It sometimes seemed to me as if I was conscious of a sort of war of temperaments between her and some pessimistic or cynical nature. It was like one of those days when, as we say, " the sun is trying to

come out." The sun of her presence never failed to come out, to banish the gray fog of the blues, the sufferings of the irritable or the disheartened. When people came to talk to her of their troubles, as they often did, the troubles seemed to shrink like the clouds on a dark day, leaving first a little peep of blue visible, and finally the whole sky, clear and fervid.

One word more, take it as a legacy, a keepsake from her. I asked her for a statement of the ideal aim of life. She paused a moment, then summed up the mighty matter in one sentence, clear and cosmic as a single rain-drop, a very epitome of her own life:

"To Learn, To Teach, To Serve, And To Enjoy!"

Battle Hymn's Author Loved Warm Religion

AN UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT from the pen of the late Julia Ward Howe, the author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," is brought to light by The Christian Register and put in print for the benefit of Unitarian church people. It was prepared as an address for some Unitarian convention, but never delivered or read. Characteristic of her own fiery spirit, a considerable portion of the author's remarks were devoted to rebuking Unitarianism in general for its lack of fervor. She thought it an enduring limitation that the early life of their fellowship was shaped "by persons in whom intellect predominated over impulse and passion." There are circles of orthodoxy as well which ought to meditate on the perils of that limitation. As Mrs. Howe well said: "If one can present religious truth in such a way as to awaken a feeling of what it promises and performs, we may make the very stones warm with a sudden availing vision of the beauty of holiness."

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